

World and the Atlantic are brought together, and a plural history emerges that cannot be straitjacketed into triumphal terrestrial histories of emancipation. Prevarication, compromise, profit, and the intransigent independence of maritime networks open up a history of “multinational slavers and defenders of ‘servitude’ from Charleston to Calcutta, and Kutch to Zanzibar”. After this book, it is impossible for historians of the maritime to stick to their respective “oceans” necessitating an engagement with continuous oceans and their multiple miscegenated networks.

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MOTEN, CRYSTAL MARIE. *Continually Working. Black Women, Community Intellectualism, and Economic Justice in Postwar Milwaukee*. [Black Lives & Liberation.] Smithsonian National Museum of American History [etc.], Washington (DC) 2023. xix, 235 pp. \$99.95. (Paper: \$34.95; E-book: \$19.99.)

In *Continually Working*, Crystal Marie Moten pairs Black women’s labor history in post-war Milwaukee with intellectual history and the theoretical insights of Women’s Studies. She focuses on Black women who critiqued their narrow economic prospects in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from the 1940s until the 1970s, fighting, what she terms, “The Jim Crow Job System”. This long, chronological scope allows Moten to examine Black women’s persistent activism against the backdrop of social movements in Milwaukee, including the Black freedom struggle, the welfare rights movement, and the post-civil rights era. She casts a wide net, focusing her study on both working-class Black women and Black women who labored for economic justice for other Black women. Drawing on manuscript collections, organizational records, newspaper articles, and many oral histories, Moten has amassed a range of sources to write this timely and much-needed history.

In this fascinating book, Moten boldly frames working-class Black women in Milwaukee as intellectual thinkers whose body of thought never reached academic texts. Importantly, she issues the caveat that even though she terms the Black women in her book “activists” and “intellectuals”, these women did not see themselves that way. Since the 2010s, there has been a resurgence of interest in African American intellectual history. Moten mines Black women’s thought in organizational meeting minutes, newsletters, grant applications, and reports, as well as more traditional published works. Historians have utilized this approach in studying enslaved men and women by analyzing their songs and folk tales, as well as scrutinizing the interviews from the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. But few historians have attempted this approach in the twentieth century. From this perspective alone, Moten is introducing a new roadmap for historians to explore Black women’s history and thought in other cities.

From a methodological perspective, she is aware of several factors about archives. First, archives – and other repositories – can be sites of violence for their silences and erasures. Next, the archives, especially government archives, do not always preserve Black women's everyday histories, but rather their moments of heightened interaction with the state. With those two methodological considerations in mind, Moten brilliantly mines these sources and locates working-class Black women in Milwaukee's vast and varied histories, using their interaction with government agencies to consider how they pursued social, economic, and political transformation in their city. By adopting this framework, Moten accomplishes two significant feats. First, building on the current conversations among Black women historians about the limitations of the archive, Moten acknowledges those gaps but, instead, frames the archive as a site of feast, not famine. Not only does she consider the Black working women in her study as thinkers but, more specifically, she probes these women's ideas about Black women's economic predicaments and possibilities. Even though historians have written about labor activist and reformer Nannie Helen Burroughs, bank president Maggie Lena Walker, and entrepreneur Madame C.J. Walker, these were elite women who were pillars of the early twentieth-century Black community. None of the women in this book will be especially familiar to readers, and yet, Moten chooses to showcase them.

On another level, Moten offers a welcome contribution to Black Women's history in the Jim Crow North. Most scholars of the Black Midwest focus on Detroit or Chicago, and neglect smaller cities. While Black labor historians have focused on Black men's unionization struggles in cities like Milwaukee, they have unconsciously omitted women. By moving Black workers' history out of the factory and into the beauty parlors, government aid offices, and the headquarters of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Moten ably demonstrates that these locations were just as crucial to the labor movement as the union hall. Beyond the important scholarship of Keona K. Ervin, few scholars have focused on Black women's post-war labor history, especially in the Midwest. Additionally, she joins a growing historiographical literature to engender the urban crisis, demonstrating how Black women in Milwaukee, like their counterparts in Baltimore and Philadelphia, navigated different government offices and institutions – including housing, schools, hospitals, and courtrooms – to advocate on behalf of themselves and their families. Moten focuses on the Black women who migrated to Milwaukee, Wisconsin in the Second Great Migration. Not only is Milwaukee a more understudied location in African American history, but its Black population was miniscule until the 1960s and 1970s, demonstrating how Black southerners streamed into the city at the height of the struggles for both Black freedom and Black power.

Organized into five chapters, Moten arranges her book chronologically with each chapter focusing on a different subject. In her first chapter, she wisely investigates the Milwaukee chapter of the YWCA, which is an important organization in Black women's history. The Milwaukee YWCA, whose racial integration did not happen until 1946, was an important site where middle-class leaders and working-class members launched ambitious programs of economic uplift and empowerment for Black working women in Milwaukee. Rather than treating Black women who sought the services of the YWCA with condescension, Moten instead discovered

that YWCA leaders approached these Black women as experts on their neighborhoods and conditions. In particular, she highlights the work and activism of Bernice Lindsay, who struggled to assist Black working women within increasingly racist and conservative leadership at the YWCA in the 1950s, resulting in her resignation. In her second chapter, she examines Black beauticians who battled against the Wisconsin Division of Cosmetology and its efforts to crush employment prospects for Black women who performed this labor without a license. The state's cosmetology division, ostensibly operating on principles of racial neutrality, required applicants to furnish legal documents stating that they were seventeen years old and had completed the tenth grade. For Black women migrants from the South, such documents were difficult to procure, thereby demonstrating the structural racism and sexism embedded in government regulation. She chronicles Mattie DeWesse who formed the Pressley School of Beauty Culture and worked to secure Black women their beautician licenses. Even though scholars have discussed the history of Black beauticians in the United States, few have considered the role that migration played. She discusses how, in the 1950s, Black beauticians in Milwaukee chartered a sorority, which became a springboard for local and national organizing.

Moten's three final chapters consider Black women's activism during the social movements of Black freedom and Black power, welfare rights, and second-wave feminism. In her third chapter, she centers the Black women who entered the offices of the Wisconsin Industrial Commission in the 1950s and 1960s to testify about their experiences of employment discrimination, highlighting the difficulties Black women workers faced in opportunities for advancement and their experiences with sexual harassment. In this chapter, Moten demonstrates a point that Black women historians often emphasize – at times, to the deaf ears of white women historians – that African American women were on the front lines against sexual harassment. White women were not the first ones to speak out against sexual harassment in the 1970s. Indeed, Black women have been discussing it since the seventeenth century. In the fourth chapter, she examines how Black women waged a robust struggle for welfare rights in Milwaukee. Evoking their motherhood, Black women staged public demonstrations in clothing stores, fought for early childhood education, and even published their findings in an anthology. Through their efforts, Black mothers and their allies succeeded, to some extent, in raising awareness about the limitations of government welfare and securing more assistance for poor mothers in the city. In her final chapter, Moten examines how Black women pressed into bureaucratic structures to demand employment accountability after the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act which, in theory, banned job discrimination but, in practice, was much more difficult to enforce. In the epilogue, Moten reflects on the three centuries of Black women's economic activism and intellectual thought to imagine a more justice future in the current era.

There is much to admire about this book. Crystal Moten has written a refreshing account about how working-class Black women waged struggles for justice in a city that is not part of the canon of Black urban history. One of the questions I had while reading this book was about the memory of World War II. As scholars have demonstrated, only 600,000 African American women were able to obtain wartime industrial jobs, and the vast majority of these positions were located in the North and Midwest. Milwaukee, in particular, was notable for

its high number of Black women war workers. I was curious how Black women's experiences of high wages and ties to the state, and then mass firing after the war shaped the substance of their activism in Milwaukee. Despite this lingering question, Moten's book is well-researched, well-argued, and offers historians interested in intellectual history an excellent framework for writing about African American women whose voices never reached the academy.

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KELLEY, SEAN M. *American Slavers. Merchants, Mariners, and the Transatlantic Commerce in Captives, 1644–1865*. Yale University Press, New Haven (CT) [etc.], 2023. 479 pp. Ill. Maps. \$35.00. (E-book: \$35.00.)

That Sean Kelley has written a major history of the United States slave trade, 1645–1866, is a significant achievement. As Kelley argues, though North American capital financed fewer than 2–3 per cent of all transatlantic slaving voyages, one should not underestimate the legacies of the slave trade for the future United States. *American Slavers* covers the expanse of first British North American and then, from 1783, United States participation in the transatlantic slave trade. (Henceforth this review will use “US” for simplicity.) Kelley focuses on the 1730–1775 years of trade growth, when Newport, Rhode Island, emerged as a principal port from which merchants organized voyages. Legislation banned slave imports from Africa after 1 January 1808; the years 1803–1807 represented the height of US slaving, the five years when Charleston became a major Atlantic slaving port. Though Congress prohibited the traffic in 1808 and made slaving a capital offense in 1820, merchants from the US continued to invest in slaving ventures, usually disembarking captives in Cuba. Importantly, the nation was the key participant in the transatlantic slave trade in the 1850s: most slaving ships were built in ports in New England and Baltimore, and New York became one of the late trade's epicenters.

*American Slavers* focuses on the pre-1808 period, first following the development of the trade. As documented in [www.slavevoyages.org](http://www.slavevoyages.org), a few early slaving voyages, small craft from New England, sailed to Upper Guinea, including the Portuguese Cape Verde Islands. In the 1690s, an atypical New York–Madagascar slave trade emerged, closely linked to smuggling and piracy. That trade ended in 1702, and the US slave trade remained small until the 1730s, when the number of voyages rose from about 1–3 per year to 5–15 per year, as Rhode Island ports were established. Boston and New York City's slave trades, outpaced by Rhode Island's, usually totaled a few voyages per year, except for the expansion from New York in the 1750s and 1760s. Similarly well-known: US vessels were small craft, sailed mostly to the Gold Coast